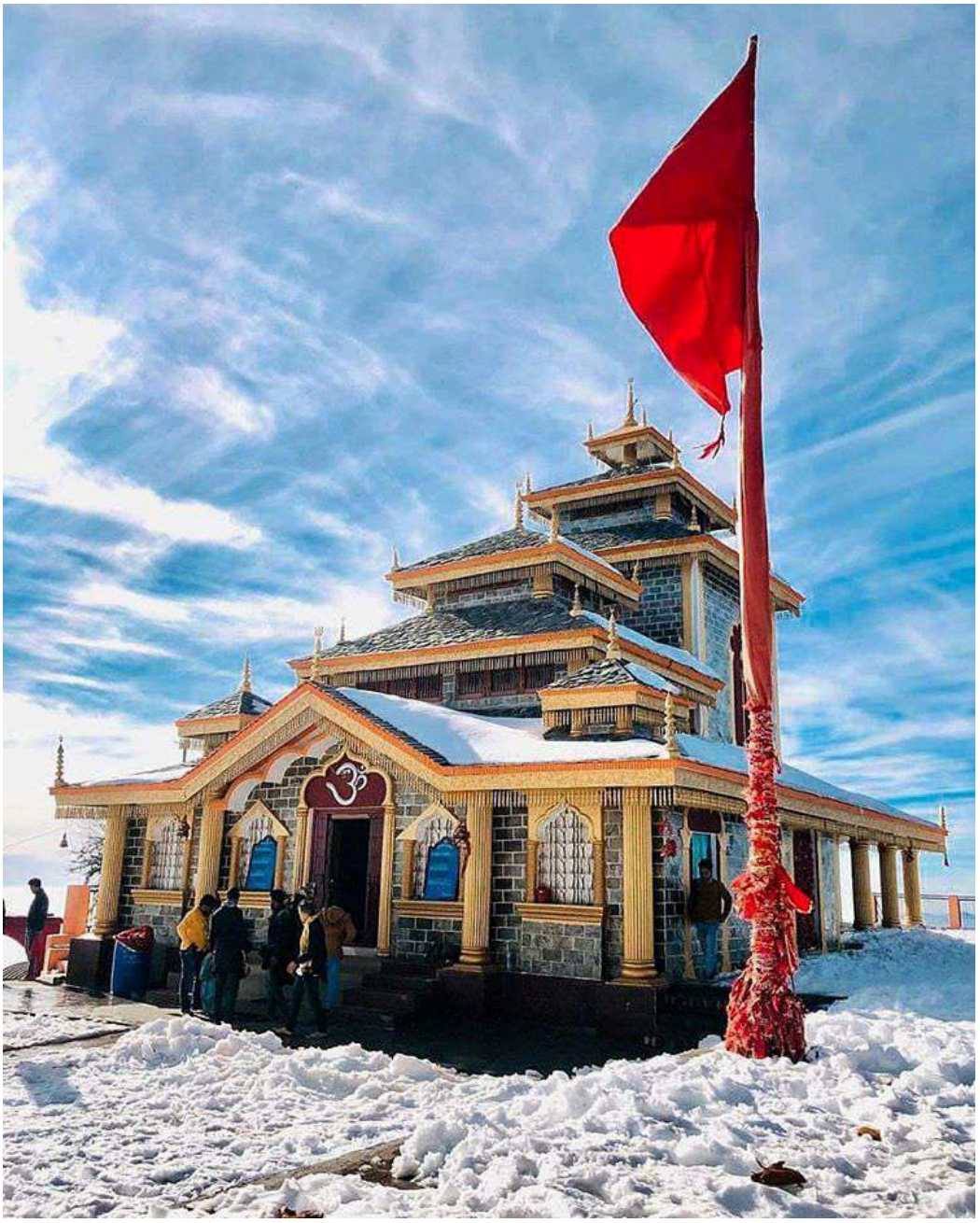
Surkanda Devi Temple, Dhanaulti, Uttarakhand

Ref: Wikipedia



Surkanda Devi Mandir

View of Surkanda Devi Temple

Surkanda Devi Temple is a Hindu shrine located near Dhanaulti in the Tehri Garhwal district of Uttarakhand, India. Situated at an altitude of approximately 2,756 metres (9,042 feet), the temple offers panoramic views of the Himalayan ranges. It is one of the revered Shakta pitha sites, associated with the mythological event where the head (*Sir*) of the goddess Sati is believed to have fallen, marking the place as a sacred center of divine consciousness.[1]

Etymology

The name "Surkanda" is believed to derive from two Sanskrit words: "Sir" meaning "head" and "Khanda" meaning "fragment," reflecting the mythological association with the goddess Sati's head falling at this site.

Surkanda Devi Temple is a HinduPriesthood

The temple priests traditionally belong to the Lekhwar Brahmin community of Pujaldi village, Patti Bamund, located near the temple.

Daksha Yajna and the Creation of Shakta pithas

According to Hindu mythology, Sati, the daughter of King Daksha and consort of Shiva, self-immolated during a sacrificial ritual (*yajna*) conducted by her father after he insulted

Shiva. Grief-stricken, Shiva wandered the universe carrying Sati's body. To pacify Shiva and restore cosmic balance, Vishnu dismembered Sati's corpse with his Sudarshana Chakra. The places where her body parts fell became known as the Shakta pitha Chandrabadani Devi. Surkanda Devi Temple marks the spot where the goddess's head is said to have fallen.[1]

Symbolism of the Head

In Hindu metaphysics, the head is considered the seat of *Chaitanya* (pure consciousness). This association gives Surkanda Devi Temple a unique spiritual significance among the Shakta pithas, emphasizing wisdom and cosmic awareness.

Shiv-Shakti and Advaita Connection

The Surkanda Devi Temple also resonates with concepts from Advaita Vedanta, which emphasizes non-duality. In this framework:

- **Shiva** represents formless pure consciousness.
- **Shakti** symbolizes dynamic creative energy.

The unity of Shiva and Shakti reflects the indivisible nature of reality. Surkanda Devi, being the seat of consciousness, symbolizes the realization of oneness beyond duality.[2]

Geography and Environment

The temple is located amidst dense forests of rhododendron, oak, and deodar trees. During winter months, Surkanda Devi often experiences snowfall, enhancing its serene and mystical appeal. The location provides sweeping views of prominent peaks such as Bandarpunch, Swargarohini, Chaukhamba, and Kedarnath.

Architecture

Surkanda Devi Temple follows traditional Himalayan stone architecture, characterized by:

- A conical *shikhara* (spire) topped by a trident (*trishula*)
- Stone construction using local materials
- Bell garlands offered by devotees
- A simple sanctum (*garbhagriha*) housing the deity

Although the temple has undergone repairs and renovations over time, it retains its ancient spiritual atmosphere.

Festivals and Rituals

Ganga Dussehra

Ganga Dussehra, celebrated in May–June, is one of the most important festivals at Surkanda Devi. Pilgrims participate in rituals and fairs organized around the temple during this period.[3]

Navratri

The festival of Navratri, dedicated to the nine forms of Goddess Durga, is celebrated with special pujas, *havan* (fire rituals), and devotional music over nine nights.

Other Observances

Pilgrimage is common on full moon days (*Purnima*), when devotees ascend the temple to seek blessings.

Pilgrimage and Access

Trek Route

The temple is reached via a moderately challenging 1.5-kilometre trek from the village of Kaddukhal. The trail passes through scenic forests and is accessible year-round, although winter visitors should prepare for snow.

Transport

- *By Air*: Nearest airport is Jolly Grant Airport, Dehradun (~90 km).
- *By Rail*: Nearest railway station is Dehradun (~70 km).
- *By Road*: Accessible via the Mussoorie-Chamba road. Kaddukhal is the base point for the trek.

Pilgrims are advised to dress warmly and carry reusable water bottles to maintain the area's ecological balance.

Conservation Efforts

Surkanda Devi Temple is situated in a fragile ecological zone. Efforts by local communities and authorities focus on:

- Eco-tourism initiatives
- Waste reduction programs
- Tree plantation drives

Visitors are encouraged to minimize plastic use and respect the sanctity of the environment.[3]

In popular culture

Though not heavily commercialized, Surkanda Devi Temple is referenced in regional travel literature and documentaries exploring sacred Himalayan sites. It remains an important part of the "Devi Darshan Triangle," which includes Kunjapuri Devi Temple and Chandrabadni Devi Temple.

***

AI Overview

The Surkanda Devi Temple is a revered Shakti Peetha located near Dhanaulti, Uttarakhand, at an altitude of approximately 2,756 meters. Dedicated to Goddess Sati, it is accessible via a steep 2 km trek or a ropeway from Kaddukhal. The temple offers panoramic Himalayan views and is open daily from 7 AM to 6 PM.

Key Information

- **Location:** Situated in the Tehri Garhwal district, near Kaddukhal village, close to both Dhanaulti (8 km) and Kanatal (10 km).
- **Significance:** It is one of 51 Shakti Peethas, marking the spot where Goddess Sati's head is believed to have fallen.
- **Views:** Provides 360-degree panoramic views of snow-capped peaks like Kedarnath, Badrinath, and Gangotri on clear days.

Accessibility and Trekking

- **Road Access:** Visitors can reach Kaddukhal by taxi or bus from Mussoorie (approx. 40 km) or Chamba.
- **Trek:** A paved path extends 2 kilometers from the parking area at Kaddukhal to the temple summit, typically taking 1.5 to 2 hours.
- **Ropeway:** A cable car service is available to transport devotees directly to the temple top, reducing travel time significantly.

Best Time to Visit and Festivals

- **Peak Season:** Summer months and winter, especially for snow trekking.
- **Festivals:** The temple holds major celebrations during **Navratri** (October) and **Ganga Dussehra** (May/June).
- **Temple Timings:** 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM (subject to seasonal variations).

For planning travel, tourists often utilize the Surkanda Devi Temple Guide for detailed directions and tips.

Nearby Attractions

- **Dhanaulti Eco Park:** A popular spot for nature lovers.
- **Kanatal:** A serene hill station nearby.
- **Tehri Lake:** Located roughly 50 km away for water sports.

*****

Ref: GrokAI

Surkanda Devi temple, Dhanauli...Uttarakhand

Location, Address, Phone

Surkanda Devi Temple is located in Kaddukhal village, Saklana Range, on the Chamba-Mussoorie Road, near Dhanaulti (also spelled Dhanolti/Dhanauli), in Tehri Garhwal district, Uttarakhand. It sits at an altitude of approximately 2,756 metres (9,042 ft) amid dense rhododendron, oak, and deodar forests.

Approximate address: Surkanda Devi Temple, Kaddukhal, Dhanaulti, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand 249145 (coordinates: 30°24'41"N 78°17'19"E).

No official public phone number for the temple is listed on government or major travel sites. Priests belong to the Lekhwar Brahmin community from nearby Pujaldi village. For queries, visitors typically contact local tourism offices in Dhanaulti, Chamba, or Tehri, or inquire on-site.

How to Get There

- **By Road (most common):** Kaddukhal is the base point (motorable). From Dhanaulti: 6–9 km (15–20 minutes by taxi/shared cab). From Mussoorie: ~35–40 km. From Chamba: ~24 km. From Dehradun: ~65–90 km (2–2.5 hours).
- **Trek Option:** 1.5–2.5 km steep uphill trek from Kaddukhal through scenic forest (45–60 minutes; path is cemented/being tiled in parts).
- **Ropeway (recommended for ease):** Recently operational Kaddukhal–temple ropeway (502 m long, ~10-minute ride, capacity 500/hour). Operates approx. 8–9 AM to 5–6 PM (season-dependent; summer longer). Round-trip ticket: ₹170–₹215 per adult (children 5–12 years: ₹100; under 5 free). One-way ~₹110.
- **Air/Rail:** Nearest airport – Jolly Grant (Dehradun), ~90–100 km. Nearest rail – Dehradun, ~67–70 km. Taxis/buses available from both.

  Best time: April–June (pleasant); carry warm clothes for high altitude and possible fog/ snow in winter.

Greatness of This Temple

It is one of the 51 Shakti Peethas (sacred sites where parts of Goddess Sati's body fell). It forms part of the revered "Devi Darshan Triangle" (Siddha Peeths) along with Kunjapuri Devi Temple and Chandrabadni Devi Temple. The temple attracts thousands of pilgrims and tourists for its spiritual power, panoramic 360° Himalayan views (peaks like Bandarpunch, Swargarohini, Chaukhamba, Kedarnath), and serene high-altitude location. It symbolizes wisdom and cosmic consciousness.

Legends and History

According to Hindu mythology, Goddess Sati (consort of Lord Shiva) self-immolated at her father Daksha's yajna after he insulted Shiva. Grief-stricken Shiva carried her body in the destructive Tandava dance. To save the universe, Lord Vishnu used his Sudarshan Chakra to dismember the body. Sati's head ("Sir" + "Khanda" = Surkanda) fell here, making it a Shakti Peetha. The temple is ancient (date uncertain), has undergone repairs/renovations, and retains its traditional spiritual aura. It is linked to the broader Shakti tradition across India.

Architecture of Temple, Deities

The temple follows traditional Himalayan stone architecture (pagoda-style) using local materials. It features a conical *shikhara* (spire) topped with a *trishul* (trident), bell garlands offered by devotees, and a simple *garbhagriha* (sanctum). The design blends seamlessly with the mountain environment.

Main Deity: Goddess Surkanda Devi (manifestation of Shakti/Sati/Parvati).

Sub-deities: Nearby smaller shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva and Lord Hanuman.

Daily Rituals and Poojas and Their Charges

Temple timings: Opens ~6:00 AM, closes ~7:00 PM (may vary slightly by season).

- Morning aarti: 6:30 AM.
- Evening aarti: 6:30 PM (or before sunset in winter) with chants, incense, and devotional singing.
  Entry and general darshan are free. Special pujas or prasad offerings are optional and arranged on-site via donation (no fixed online charges; rates are posted or nominal at the temple).

Special Poojas and Rituals and Their Charges

Special pujas, *havan*, and rituals are performed during festivals or on request. These are handled directly at the temple (no advance online booking or fixed public charges listed). Devotees offer donations as per their capacity. Priests perform them in the traditional manner.

Festivals

- **Ganga Dussehra** (May/June): Major festival with fairs, rituals, and large crowds.
- **Navratri** (twice a year): Nine nights of special pujas, *havan*, and devotional music for the nine forms of Durga.
- Full moon days (*Purnima*): Popular for pilgrimage and darshan.

Facilities for Devotees (Accommodation, etc.)

- No on-site accommodation or rest house at the temple.
- Snack shops and basic facilities available behind the temple.
- Ropeway and improved trek path make it accessible for all ages (including elderly and families).
- Eco-friendly practices encouraged (minimize plastic; support local conservation).
  Accommodation is available in nearby hill stations (see below).

Donation Info and Bank Account Number

Donations for pujas, maintenance, or prasad are welcome and can be made on-site (donation box or to priests). No public bank account details, online donation portal, or trust account numbers are listed on official/government websites or major travel resources. Contributions are typically handled directly at the temple.

Nearby Temples

- **Kunjapuri Devi Temple** and **Chandrabadni Devi Temple** – complete the sacred "Devi Darshan Triangle" (Siddha Peeths). These are popular combined pilgrimage circuits.

Other Tourist Attractions

- Dhanaulti and Kanatal hill stations (serene views, forests, eco-tourism).
- Panoramic Himalayan snow peaks and dense forests around the temple.
- Tehri Dam/Lake (water sports, boating) and Chamba town.
- Mussoorie (40 km) for broader sightseeing.

Nearby Budget Hotels

Budget-friendly options (approx. ₹1,500–₹4,000/night depending on season; check current rates) are concentrated in Dhanaulti and Kanatal (5–10 km away):

- GMVN Tourist Rest House (Dhanaulti) – government-run, economical.
- Aurevelle Kastura Resort / Kastura Cottages (Kanatal) – mountain views, starting ~₹2,500–3,500.
- The Gypsy Soul Resort (Kanatal) – popular, good reviews.
- Other affordable stays: The Dhanolti Groove Garden, various homestays/resorts in Kanatal/Dhanaulti.
  Book in advance, especially during festivals or peak summer. Many offer Himalayan views and basic amenities.

Any Other Info

- The area is eco-sensitive; follow "leave no trace" principles.
- Weather can change rapidly – carry rain gear/warm layers.
- The ropeway has made the temple far more accessible than the traditional trek alone
- Combine with a visit to the Devi Triangle for a fulfilling spiritual trip.

This information is compiled from official district sources, Wikipedia, and established Uttarakhand tourism portals. For the latest timings/charges (especially ropeway or pujas), confirm on-site or via local tourism desks upon arrival, as minor seasonal variations occur.

****

Ref: Google Gemini

The **Surkanda Devi Temple** is one of the most revered spiritual sites in the Garhwal Himalayas. Perched at an altitude of approximately **2,757 meters (9,045 feet)**, it is famous for its 360-degree panoramic views of the snow-capped Himalayan peaks and the lush Doon Valley.

Below is the detailed information for research and documentation:

1. Location & Accessibility

- **Address:** Kaddukhal, Dhanaulti, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, India.
- **Distance:** Approximately 7 km from Dhanaulti, 35 km from Mussoorie, and 24 km from Chamba.
- **How to Get There:**
    - **By Road:** Reach **Kaddukhal** via taxi or bus from Mussoorie or Dehradun.
    - **Trek:** From Kaddukhal, there is a steep but well-paved **2 km uphill trek** (approx. 45–60 minutes).
    - **Ropeway:** A cable car service (Kaddukhal-Siddhpeeth Devi Ropeway) is available, taking about 10–15 minutes.
    - **Nearest Rail/Air:** Dehradun Railway Station (67 km) and Jolly Grant Airport (100 km).

2. Significance & Greatness

Surkanda Devi is one of the **51 Shakti Peethas**. It is highly respected as a *Siddha Peetha*, a place where devotees believe their wishes are fulfilled. Its geographical height makes it one of the highest Shakti shrines in Northern India.

3. Legends & History

According to Hindu mythology, when Lord Shiva was performing the *Tandava* with the charred body of **Goddess Sati**, Lord Vishnu used his *Sudarshana Chakra* to dismember the body to calm Shiva's grief. It is believed that the **head (Sir/Sur)** of Sati fell at this exact spot, giving the temple the name **Surkanda** (originally *Sirkhanda*).

4. Architecture & Deities

- **Architecture:** The temple follows the traditional **Pahari (Himalayan) style**, primarily built with stone and wood to withstand the mountain climate. It features a simple white facade with a small sanctum.
- **Primary Deity:** Goddess Surkanda (a manifestation of Goddess Durga/Sati).
- **Sub-Deities:** Small idols of Lord Hanuman and Ganesha are present within the complex.

5. Rituals, Poojas & Charges

- **Daily Rituals:**
    - **Mangala Aarti:** 6:00 AM – 6:30 AM
    - **Afternoon Pooja:** 12:00 PM – 12:30 PM
    - **Sandhya Aarti:** 5:00 PM (Winter) / 7:00 PM (Summer)
    -
- **Charges:** Entry to the temple is free. Specific ritual charges (like *Archana* or *Special Bhog*) are typically nominal and payable at the temple counter.
- **Ropeway Charges:** Approximately **₹177** for a round trip (current rates may vary slightly).

6. Festivals & Facilities

- **Festivals: Ganga Dussehra** (May/June) is the most grandly celebrated festival here, featuring a large local fair. **Navratri** is also a peak time for pilgrimage.
- **Facilities:** * Basic shops for snacks and puja items are available at the base (Kaddukhal) and near the temple.
    - **Accommodation:** While there are no major guest houses on the hilltop, many devotees stay in Dhanaulti or Kanatal. Government Forest Rest Houses and private resorts are available in the vicinity.

.

7. Donations & Bank Information

Donations are handled by the **Temple Management Committee**. For official bank account numbers, it is recommended to contact the committee directly at the temple office or through the **Uttarakhand Char Dham Devasthanam Management Board** portal, as bank details for local trusts are often updated for security.

8. Nearby Attractions & Hotels

- **Nearby Temples:** * **Chandrabadni Temple:** Another Shakti Peetha located on a mountain top in Tehri.
    - **Dashavatar Temple:** An ancient temple located in Dhanaulti.
    -
- **Other Attractions:** * **Eco Park (Dhanaulti):** Famous for deodar forests.
    - **Tehri Dam:** One of the tallest dams in the world.
    - **Kanatal:** A serene hill station for nature walks.
- **Budget Hotels:**
    - **Morning Breeze Homestay** (Kanatal)
    - **Anjali Homestay** (Jadipani)
    - **Drona Hills Resorts** (Jadipani)
    - Various budget lodges are available along the **Mussoorie-Chamba road**.

Note: For digital archiving, you may find the **Ganga Dussehra** fair particularly interesting as it showcases unique local Garhwali folk traditions and music.

****

More info on legends, history, rituals and charges, ropeway…etc:

let's dive deeper into the historical and spiritual layers of this sacred site, along with the practical details regarding the ropeway and rituals for your records.

1. Deep History & The "Sirkhanda" Legend

The name "Surkanda" is a linguistic evolution of the word **Sirkhanda** (Sanskrit: *Sir* - Head, *Khanda* - Fragment).

- **The Legend of Sati:** The primary history is rooted in the *Daksha Yagna*. When Goddess Sati immolated herself due to the insult to Lord Shiva, Shiva's subsequent "Tandava" (dance of cosmic destruction) threatened the universe. To restore balance, Lord Vishnu severed Sati's body into 51 pieces. Her **head** fell at this peak.
- **Spiritual Significance:** Because the head represents the seat of consciousness and wisdom, Surkanda Devi is worshipped as the provider of mental clarity and spiritual awakening.
- **Historical Continuity:** While the current structure is a modern renovation, the site has been a center of "Shakti" worship for centuries, with the local Garhwali kings and villagers considering her their primary protector (Kuldevi).

2. Daily Rituals & Fees

The temple maintains a disciplined schedule that varies slightly by season.

- **General Entry:** Free.
- **Standard Pooja (Daily):**
    - **Pancha-Upachara Pooja:** Performed every morning involving five elements: Fragrance (Chandan), Flowers, Incense (Dhup), Lamp (Deep), and Food (Naivedya).
    - **Aarti:** Twice daily (Morning and Evening). Visitors can participate by standing in the courtyard; there is no fee to attend the Aarti.
- **Specific Pooja Offerings:**
    - **Bhog/Prasad:** Devotees often bring coconuts, red cloth (Chunari), and sweets. Small packets are available from local vendors near the gate for **₹50–₹200**.
    - **Archana/Personal Sankalp:** If you request a priest for a specific personal prayer (Naam-Gotra Sankalp), a voluntary "Dakshina" (offering) is customary, usually ranging from **₹101 to ₹501**.

.3. Special Poojas & Festivals

- **Ganga Dussehra (May/June):** The biggest annual event. A special "Mela" (fair) is held. Rituals involve the ceremonial bathing of the deity and special "Havan" (fire rituals).
- **Navratri (Chaitra & Sharad):** Nine days of intense chanting and special Shringar (decoration) of the Goddess.

- **Havan Service:** Devotees can sponsor a "Havan" for peace and prosperity. The charges for these larger rituals are typically managed through the Temple Trust office and can range from **₹1,100 to ₹5,100** depending on the complexity and materials provided.

4. The Kaddukhal-Siddhpeeth Ropeway

Inaugurated in 2022, this has transformed the pilgrimage for many, especially the elderly.

- **Technical Detail:** The ropeway is approximately **502 meters** long and significantly cuts down the 2 km steep trek.
- **Travel Time:** 5 to 10 minutes (compared to a 45–60 minute hike).
- **Capacity:** It can transport about 500 people per hour.
- **Current Charges (Approximate for 2026):**
    - **Round Trip: ₹225 per person** (inclusive of GST).
    - **One Way:** Sometimes available for approximately **₹120–₹150**.
- **Timings:** Generally operates from **7:00 AM to 5:00 PM**, strictly following the temple's opening hours and weather conditions (it may close during high winds or heavy snow).

5. Summary Table for the Archives

Feature	Details
Ancient Name	Sirkhanda (Head fragment of Sati)
Altitude	2,757 Meters
Ropeway Fee	₹225 (Round trip)
Pony/Mule Fee	₹500 - ₹800 (Alternative to Ropeway)
Best Time for Research	May to June (Ganga Dussehra)
Photography	Allowed in courtyard; restricted inside the Garbhagriha

You might note that while the ropeway is convenient, the traditional trek route is lined with native **Rhododendron** (Burans) trees which bloom in bright red during March and April, offering a very different "natural" history to the site.

****

Ref: larissaresort.com

Surkanda Devi Temple: Guide to Divine Shrine Near Mussoorie

By LaRiSa | May 13 2024

Overlooking the low-lying Himalayan foothills, the Surkanda Devi Temple calls to both the devotionally driven and fans of nature. It's a sacred spot situated midway between Mussoorie and Dhanaulti, two travellers-loved hills in Uttarakhand's Tehri zone. Sited atop Kaddukhal village's hill, it's a short 10-km hop from Kanatal and 37 km away from Mussoorie. The temple site is perched at an impressive high of 9,041 feet.

Dedicated to **Goddess Sati**, worshippers revere Surkanda Devi Temple as a **Shakti Peetha**. Legend says when Lord Shiva carried Sati's corpse after she self-immolated, her head fell at this sacred spot. "Surkanda" translates to "Sati's head", hence the temple's name and significance.

The temple attracts scores of devotees throughout the year. But, the peak seasons are **during Navratri** in October and the **Ganga Dussehra** festival in June. People offer special prayers at that time.

Reaching Surkanda Devi Temple

You can reach **Surkanda Devi Temple** either by your vehicle or using public transport. Here are the detailed directions:

By Road

Dehradun and Dhanolti have a steady service of buses in the morning. Dhanolti's bus station, which is only 2 km away from a temple, is the closest bus station and if you are driving your own car, then Surkanda Devi Temple is a 65 km journey from Dehradun. Count on around 2 hours for the drive.

By Train

Dehradun is the nearest railway station. It is located 63 km from the temple. You can hire a taxi or take a bus to Dhanolti from Dehradun.

By Air

The nearest airport to the temple is **Jolly Grant Airport** in Dehradun, a distance of 88 km. Road links between Dhanolti and Dehradun are pretty good.

Ropeway at Surkanda Devi

In 2022, Uttarakhand Chief Minister **Pushkar Singh Dhami** inaugurated a ropeway service to ease the climb up to the temple. This has made reaching **Surkanda Devi Temple** much more convenient for devotees.

The 502 m long ropeway transports people to the temple in just 10-15 minutes. It's able to handle 500 pilgrims every hour.

The two-way ticket for the **Surkanda Devi** ropeway costs ₹205 per person. The ride offers scenic views of the lush forests and valleys beneath.

Trekking Route and Difficulty

Want to hike to Surkanda Devi Temple, Dhanaulti? You'll start at Kaddukhal base. This upward path is 2.5 km long. Should take you about 1.5 to 2 hours. You'll climb 850 m. It's worth it!

The well-defined trail has concrete steps at places. The ascent is steep at parts but the temple route is not difficult for beginners. You can take rest stops to admire the panoramic valley views along the way.

Do carry water and snacks as there are no shops after the midway point. Also, wear good trekking shoes as the path can get slippery during rains.

Temple Architecture & Legends

The temple architecture is simple yet captivating. The white facade and small sanctorum with the Devi idol grab your attention. They do so after the uphill trek.

According to legends, Surkanda Mata Temple originated when Lord Shiva was wandering India. He was with Devi Sati's corpse after her death. They say her head fell at this spot, which led to the construction of the temple.

The Goddess is adorned with silk garments and silver crowns. There is also an idol of Lord Hanuman on the premises.

During special occasions, devotees adorn the temple walls. They use colorful cloth decorations and flowers.

Best Time to visit Surkanda Devi Temple

Surkanda Devi Temple is at a high altitude. So, its weather is pleasant all year.

Summer (March - June) is ideal to see the hillsides blooming with rhododendrons. Ganga Dussehra festival is also celebrated during summer. Carry light woolens.

Monsoons (July - September) turn the temple surroundings lush green. But, the trails get slippery. Carry rain protection gear.

Winters (October - February) offer chilly weather with lows of 2°C. Snow covers the temple. This makes the trek harder. We recommend heavy woolens.

Avoid the afternoon period in summer when it can get a bit warm. Mornings and evenings are pleasant.

Temple Timings and Visiting Duration

The timings of **Surkanda Devi Temple** are:

- 5 AM to 7 PM in summer
- 7 AM to 5 PM in winter

You will need around 3 hours at the temple including the trek up and down. For sightseeing around Dhanolti and Kanatal, keep aside a full day.

Staying overnight is not allowed at the temple. Accommodation is easily available at Dhanolti and Kanatal.

Food Options near Surkanda Devi

There are only a couple of small shops selling snacks and drinks midway through the trek. Carry your own food and water for the trek.

At Dhanolti and Kanatal, you can find nice cafes. They offer Indian and continental food. Some popular options are Hill View Cafe, Sherwood Cafe, and Baithak Restaurant.

Places to Visit near Surkanda Devi

Here are some amazing places to see near the temple:

Dhanaulti

Dhanaulti is just 22 km away. Dhanaulti is a quaint hill station. It has dense rhododendron forests, alpine meadows, and wide views of the Himalayas.

Kanatal

The Surkanda Devi trek start point is 8 km away from Kanatal. Imagine fields of bright green, surrounded by pine trees. These spots are great for setting up a tent, having a picnic, or taking a stroll.

Mussoorie

The famous Queen of Hills needs no introduction! Enjoy the vibrant cafes, bungee jumping, boating, and the scenic Gun Hill ropeway here. For those willing to enjoy a peaceful and memorable stay in a beautiful **Resort in Mussoorie**, Larisa Resort is the best choice.

Landour

Explore old churches and Colonial architecture. You can also visit cafes in this cantonment town. It is just 35 km from the temple. The views from Lal Tibba are unmissable.

Escape the hot Indian summer. Go to the spiritual Surkanda Devi Temple for a refreshing Himalayan holiday!

Need a relaxing stay after visiting that beautiful shrine? Look no further than our **Mussoorie resort**! With live music, a great restaurant, and a peaceful library, it's the perfect place to unwind. Book now to create lasting memories.

***

Ref: indiahikes.com

Surkanda Devi Trek

Trek to one of the 51 Shaktipeeth Temples of India

Surkanda Devi Temple is located near Dhanolti in the Unniyal Village of Tehri district of Uttarakhand. It is one of India's 51 Shaktipeeth temples and is of great religious importance. Surkanda Devi Temple is located at an altitude of about 9,041 feet above sea level. The place is encompassed by dense and thick backwoods.

The trek starts from Dhanolti and there is a well laid trail throughout. Initially for a few meters, you've stairs and then you've the concretized trail fenced on the valley side till the top. This trail is very scenic and offers beautiful views of the surroundings. From the top, you can enjoy stunning views of the dense forests and panoramic views of the Himalayan peaks.
The architecture of Surkanda Devi Temple is fascinating. The simple structural sanctuary of the temple is the idol of Marsarkanda Devi, beautifully adorned with silk robes and silver crowns. The idol of Lord Hanuman and also the statue of a goddess sitting on a lion can be seen on the temple grounds. Ganga Dussehra is a major festival celebrated here. The festival begins on the first day of the month of Jyeshtha and ends on the tenth day. Navaratri is also celebrated at this temple.
Surkanda Devi Trek is an easy trek and can be done by both beginners and experienced trekkers.
Table of Contents
Just like you, we love trekking! And this is a trek we've documented in great detail to help you do it on your own. Drop in comments at the end of the page if you need any help! You will get all the information required to do Surkanda Devi Trek on your own.

To navigate through the documentation easily, use this section of the Table of Contents.

- Highlights
- Trail Information
- Best Season to do the Surkanda Devi Trek
- Difficult Sections on the Surkanda Devi Trek
- How to Reach the Surkanda Devi Trek

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Emergency Contacts on the Surkanda Devi Trek
- ATMs and Networks on the trek
- Places to visit after the Surkanda Devi Trek

Highlights

1. The architecture of the temple

The Surkanda Devi Temple is one of the 51 Shakti Peeth and has a great religious importance. The architecture of the temple is fascinating. After a hard ascent, the first glimpse of the temple draws your attention too.

Surkanda Devi Temple at the top. Picture by Deepali Bansal

2. The views on the trail

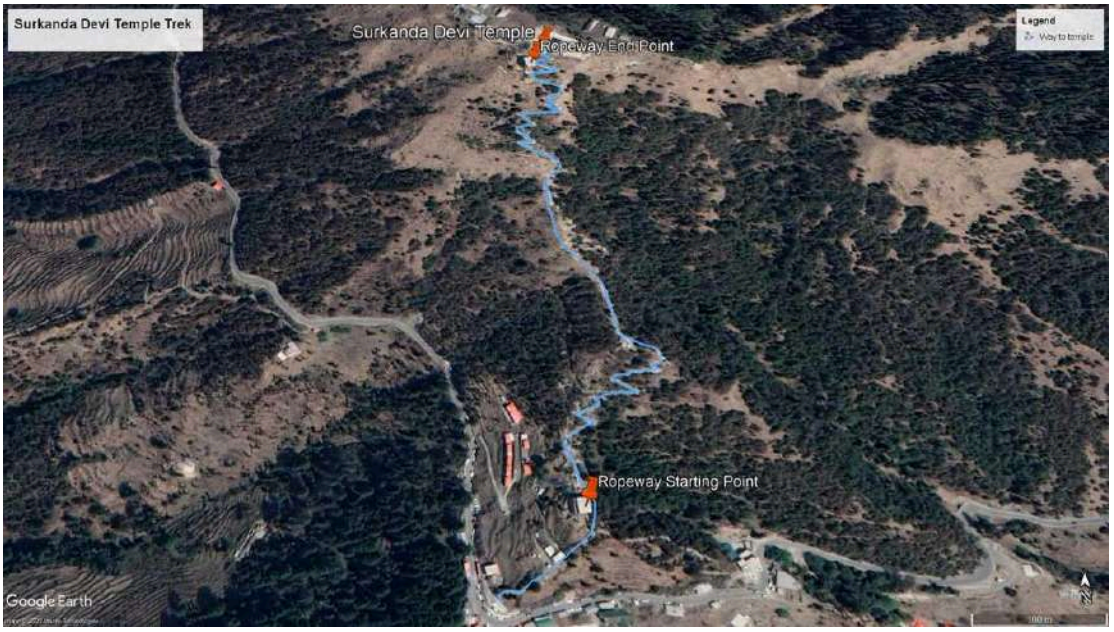
The views you get on the trail are breathtaking. Though the entire trail is concretized and well laid out, it offers you some of the best views. Every turn on the trail opens up to beautiful views of the surrounding valley. Don't forget to take some time out and enjoy these views along the way.

Beautiful views of the surroundings you get throughout the trail. Picture by Deepali Bansal

The views from the temple are beautiful too. You get a 360-degree view of the entire valley surrounding the temple. You also get majestic views of the snow capped mountains from here. The views are worth the struggles to reach there.

Trail Information

Route Map



Route Map of Surkanda Devi Trek. Screenshot on Google Earth Pro

Section I: From the base to the Summit

Trek Distance: 2.5 km
Trek Duration: 1.5 - 2 hours
Altitude gain: 8192 ft to 9041 ft
Highlights: Temple Darshan, Viewpoint, Sightseeing, bird-watching and photography

Concretized stairs leading toward the massive red-painted entry gate mark the starting point of the trek. The entire trail of 2.5 km is steep and sloppy. However, it's a well-laid trail with fencing throughout the valley side.

Start point of the Surkanda Devi Trek. Picture by Deepali Bansal

The stairs ascend gradually to the steep uphill. It leads to the starting point of the ropeway. The ropeway service is fully functional now. It is about 502 meters long and takes 10-15 minutes to reach the top. Near this area is the pony hiring area, from where you may hire a pony to cover the entire length. The amount per pony is variable and depends on your visiting season. However, we do not advise trekkers to take a pony or any animal to trek. We encourage you to trek with the right spirit of trekking.

Aerial view of the ropeway to Surkanda Devi Temple. Picture by Deepali Bansal

Ahead of this, the trail is concretized, curvy, and steep. You may rest on the benches placed on the way if tired. About half a kilometer ahead is the shop area where you will find essential food and drinks along with religious materials & prasad. This is the last place for you to buy anything. There are no shops going further.

A glimpse of the curvy uphill trek with proper trail and fencing. Picture by Deepali Bansal

The dense forest around the trail gives the entire landscape a breathtaking view. The trail is popular amongst bird watchers and photographers. Every turn of the trail unfolds the beauty of mountains. You won't be disappointed at all at any point in the trekking.

Every turn on the trail leads to a beautiful view. Picture by Deepali Bansal

As you gradually walk forward, the trail goes slightly uphill. Long steps throughout the trail will help you maintain your pace. Strong winds and a mesmerizing view of nature will detoxify you while trekking. There are many viewpoints on the way. Or you may say that every turn is a viewpoint.
Soon you will see the shoe keeping area near the temple where you must remove leather belts and shoes. Near this is the ropeway endpoint. Pony also drops you at this spot only. The temple is about 100 meters from here.

Note: There is no stream or water source on the trail. So carry at least 2 liters of water per person.
The temple has an open ground in front of it and large spaces around it, from where you can easily enjoy the beauty of the landscape. The Himalayas in the north and valley view in the south adds to the beauty of the place. At the top of the hill, the cool breeze gets stronger, giving you a more relaxed feeling. So you might need a woolen layer there.

Panoramic view of the valley. Picture by Deepali Bansal

The temple is well built. This ancient temple is famous for its architectural beauty. In the winter, the entire temple is surrounded by thick snow layers, which makes the trek slightly challenging but even more beautiful.

Surkanda Devi temple. Picture by Deepali Bansal

From the summit, you get breathtaking views of snow capped mountains. Spend around half an hour to one hour here.
The descent is through the same route as the ascent. It'll take about an hour to descend.

Glimpse of snow-capped Himalayas from the top of the hill. Picture by Deepali Bansal

Note: Since May 2022, the ropeway service has been operational. The ropeway is about 502 meters long and can carry up to 500 tourists per hour. The ropeway facility is a significant relief for the devotees visiting Surkanda Devi temple for darshan and also makes the trail less crowded for trekkers.

History

The story of Surkanda Devi Temple is deeply rooted in the Hindu Mythology. It's said that a Yagya was arranged by Daksha Prajapati. In that Yagya, Lord Shiva was not invited on purpose and was insulted by Daksha Prajapati. Sati Mata couldn't stand this and ended her life in the fire of sacrifice. When Lord Shiva got to know about this, he was out of control. He destroyed Yagya and decapitated Daksha Prajapati. He later regained Prajapati's life but gave him a goat's head. Lord Shiva picked up Sati Mata's corpse and ascended into the sky. Vishnu cut Satimata's body into 51 parts using his Sudarshana Chakra. These parts fell into different parts of India, each becoming a Shakti Peeth. Mata sati's head fell into where the Surkanda Devi Temple is now standing.

Best season to do the Surkanda Devi Trek

Surkanda Devi Trek can be done throughout the year.
The temperature at Surkanda Devi temple drops to 2-3 ℃ in winters. Thick white snow sheets in the entire landscape give the place an astonishing view.
In monsoon, the slope becomes too slippery, and thus,you need to be extra careful. But this is the best time to witness the whole place in lush greenery.
Strong winds can be experienced almost all year round. Warm clothes are thus recommended for Surkanda Devi Trek from October to April.

Difficult Sections on the Surkanda Devi Trek

There are no difficult sections on the trek as such. The trail is also concretized and well laid out throughout.
However, the ascent is steep and could be tiring. Make sure you're well prepared. Keep hydrating yourself during the trek.

How to Reach the Surkanda Devi Trek

The trek starts from Dhanolti. You can reach the base either by Private Vehicle or Public Transport.

Reaching the Surkanda Devi Base by Your Own Vehicle

Surkanda Devi Base is about 65 km from Dehradun. It'll take about 2 hours to reach. Use this link to help set navigation on google maps.

Reaching the Surkanda Devi Base by Public Transport System

There are buses from Dehradun to Mussoorie. Take a bus to Mussoorie.
From Mussoorie to Dhanolti, buses run in the early morning between 6.00 AM and 7.30 AM. It costs between Rs 100 and Rs 150 per person.

Nearest Airport and Railway Station

Airport: The nearest airport is Dehradun Airport, about 97 km from the temple.
Railway Station: Dehradun Railway Station is the nearest and is about 67 km from the base.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Permission and Camping

No permission is required to do the Surkanda Devi Trek. As it's a place of religious importance as well, camping at the peak is prohibited.

Stay Options near the Trek

You can easily find a good staying option near the trek.
Kanatal and Dhanolti are the most opted places to stay when visiting the Surkanda Devi temple. The charges are, however, variable depending on the season of visit and services provided. You can easily get one for under Rs 2,000 with few facilities in your stay.

Timings on the Trek

There are no specific timing restrictions to do the trek.
However, for the temple visit, timings vary depending on the season.

- 5:00 AM to 7:00 PM during summer.
- 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM during winters.

Food and Water Source on the Trek

Food: There are many small shops near the base of the trek and on the trail, as mentioned above. You may enjoy some local food in these shops.
Green Tip: Make sure you always carry a tiffin box and a mug along with you. This is to make sure that you don't litter anywhere on the trail and keep it clean.
Water: There is no natural water source on the way so don't forget to carry your water bottles with you. There are local shops from where you get packaged water bottles. But these are again not sustainable. Carry at least 2 litres of water with you.

Emergency Contacts on the Surkanda Devi Trek

Nearest Hospital and Police Station

Hospital: Landour Community Hospital is the nearest hospital and is around 30 km from the base. It takes about an hour to reach there.

Police Station: Police Post Dhanolti is the nearest police station and is around 6 km away from the base. It takes about 15 minutes to reach there.
ERSS: For any kind of emergency help, you can contact the Pan-India Emergency Response Support System(ERSS) number - 112.

ATMs and Networks on the trek

There are no ATMs anywhere near the base. Make sure you carry enough cash from Mussoorie or from the city you're traveling from.
You get a good network of all major service providers such as Jio and Airtel throughout the trek.

Places to Visit after the Trek

1. **Kanatal:** Kanatal is a famous hill-view destination in Uttarakhand, situated 10 km away from Surkanda Devi Temple. You can go trekking in the Kaudia forest range in Kanatal if you are a nature seeker. It is also famous for its camping beauty and location. The place is enveloped in lush green cover where you can definitely seek peace by sitting under the stars or enjoying the snowfall.
2. **Dhanolti:** Dhanolti, the land of hidden treasures of nature, is around 6 km away from Surkanda Devi Base. The place is bordered by rhododendron trees, making it an incredible landscape. It is famous for camping, birding, mountain climbing and other adventurous activities.
3. **Landour:** Home to the highest peak of Mussoorie, Landour is famous amongst tourists for its excellent nature trails and the snow-capped Himalayan views. Lal Tibba, the highest peak of Mussoorie is also located here. If you are seeking thrill and adventure, it is a must to go.

Trek Contribution

Trek documented and **photos contributed** by Deepali Bansal.
Trek edited by Manasa N L.

****

Videos

Surkanda Devi Temple near Mussoorie (13 min):
https://youtu.be/o9c6UPyCWoI?si=sbH_dUNPYQhgA5BJ
Surkanda Devi Temple…full info(14 min);
https://youtu.be/a94lOV3c9cE?si=5pPJSiSVR_NDyQvC
Surkanda Devi Temple…full info (21 min):
https://youtu.be/qDtBIGQJ50E?si=VapV-pXHDKSjqZQc
Surkanda Devi Mandir …. Dhanaulti tourist places (20 min):
https://youtu.be/m6t36Br3mns?si=Jnt_ACNvFA3AInmq
****

Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar
April 5, 2026
****